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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE — Radio Service — OFFICE OF INFORMATION

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Housekeepers' Chats — Thurs., April 19/28

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Subject: "Chiefly About Salads." Recipe for Mayonnaise Dressing, from Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. D. A.

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About six weeks ago I received a letter from a radio friend who asked a number of questions about salads. I'm sorry to say that she forgot to include her address; otherwise she would have had a personal reply to her letter, long before now. Her first question is this: "Should the salad be a separate course, at a simple, informal dinner, when one or two friends drop in?"

It depends upon the kind of salad, and whether or not you want to stay at the table with your guests, or play waitress between courses.

Her next question is this: "When salad is served separately, what should accompany it?"

Salted crackers are very nice with salad; so are cheese straws. There's a recipe for Cheese Straws in the Radio Cookbook, on page 68.

The third and last question in the letter is: "Don't you think that pineapple, celery, and lettuce hearts, combined into an attractive salad, would be nice after a meat course?"

Yes, very good, with French Dressing.

The next thing on the program is a letter, chiefly about salads. "Dear Aunt Sammy," writes a radio listener, "what would you do with a husband who simply refuses to eat any kind of a salad? He says that meat and potatoes are good enough for him, that all this talk about 'fresh fruits and vegetables' is nonsense. In the spring, my husband fills up on drug store tonics, although I have suggested, time and again, that if he'd eat the salads I prepare he wouldn't need sulphur-and-molasses mixtures. What shall I do with him, Aunt Sammy?"

When I read this letter, I was somewhat surprised. Really, I didn't suppose there was a husband in the country who doesn't know that fresh vegetables supply the minerals, vitamins, and bulk, needed in the diet.

The body must have mineral matter, to build and repair bones, teeth, and other tissues, and to keep it in good running order. Calcium is found in cauliflower, Swiss chard, peas, turnips, carrots, parsnips, oranges, and certain other fruits and vegetables. Iron is supplied by fruits in general, and by the green-leaf vegetables, such as lettuce and dandelion greens, and spinach, particularly spinach. As a source of iron, spinach is in a class by itself. Iron, in green vegetables, and in fruits, is a more useful tonic than expensive mineral waters.

Vegetables which furnish iron, are almost sure to be good sources of the vitamins, so important for growth and health. Vitamin C, which is far less widely distributed than A and B, is found chiefly in fruits and vegetables. Vitamin C is abundant in oranges, strawberries, lemons, tomatoes, and raw-leaf vegetables, such as lettuce, cabbage and watercress.

To sum up the advantages of fresh fruit and vegetable salads, from a dietetic standpoint, we might say that these salads are rich sources of vitamins and mineral substances, and they furnish bulk, which helps prevent constipation.

There--if you tell all those perfectly good reasons for eating salad, to your husband, I believe he will change his ways.

There are other reasons, besides dietetic ones, for serving salads. They provide a convenient and attractive way of using left-overs, and they add to the meal pleasing contrasts in color, flavor, and texture.

One must use judgment in selecting the salad to fit a menu. For a hearty meal, a light salad, that is, a leafy green vegetable, and French dressing, is appropriate; or a leafy green vegetable, an acid fruit, and French dressing.

With a light meal, one wants a hearty salad, with a cooked or mayonnaise dressing. Salads of vegetables, eggs, fish, cheese, or meat, or a combination of these, may often serve as the main dish of a light meal. A hearty salad should never be used as a side dish.

Now let's talk about salads in general. Salads are always more appetizing, when they contain something succulent, to crunch between the teeth. This succulence, which some people think is the chief charm of a salad, is supplied by lettuce, celery, cabbage, apples, pickles, watercress, and so forth.

All salad greens should be served crisp. Wash them thoroughly, first in running water, or by lifting them out of two or three waters. Then wrap them in a cloth, or put them in a clean paper bag. Set them on ice, or in a cool place, to "crisp."

The secret of a crisp, tasty, salad lies in having the ingredients fresh; cold, with no drops of water clinging to the leaves; and carefully combined. When vegetables or fruits are cut up, or diced, the pieces should be large enough so the salad won't be mushy, when the dressing is added. As a general rule, the dressing should not be mixed with the other materials, until just before serving. The dressing tends to wilt the vegetables, and salad greens. Of course there are exceptions to this rule, as there are to all good rules. Potato salad is one exception.

The kind of salad dressing to use depends largely upon when the salad is to be served. For instance, a dinner salad, where the rest of the meal is fairly heavy, usually needs a light dressing, such as a French dressing. Luncheon or supper salads, or those served with party refreshments, may have the richer dressings, such as mayonnaise, cooked dressing, or cream dressing.

I'm going to give you a reliable recipe for Mayonnaise Dressing, this morning, since there have been so many requests for it.

Seven ingredients, for Mayonnaise Dressing:

1 egg yolk
3/4 to 1 cup oil
2 tablespoons lemon juice or vinegar
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon pepper
Paprika, and
1/2 teaspoon sugar

Listen carefully, and I'll repeat the seven ingredients for Mayonnaise Dressing: (Repeat)

Mix the spices. Add about half of the acid, which may be either vinegar or lemon juice, or a combination of the two. Add the egg yolk, and beat slightly. Then begin adding oil, about a teaspoon or two at a time. Continue adding oil until a heavy mixture is formed. The remainder of the acid may be worked in, as the mixture becomes very thick. Don't use more than one cup of oil, because that is all that can be satisfactorily combined with one egg yolk.

There are many ways to vary this standard Mayonnaise dressing. Many housewives make up a supply of mayonnaise, put it in the ice box, and add special seasoning to the amount used for one meal. For instance, if you want a Russian dressing, for a crisp green salad, you can make the Russian dressing by adding a little tomato chili sauce, or tomato catsup with lemon juice to your mayonnaise.

Perhaps you want a Thousand Island dressing. Thousand Island dressing is a mayonnaise dressing, to which chopped, highly flavored materials are added. There is no rule about what these finely chopped ingredients should be. Often as many as half a dozen different things are added in small quantities, very finely diced. Some suggestions are hard-cooked eggs, pickle, olives, celery green peppers, pimentos, capers, and onion. Use a combination of any of these materials you have on hand.

If you are serving a fruit salad, and want to use your Mayonnaise dressing with it, add whipped cream to your Mayonnaise, and a little extra sugar and salt.

I won't discuss salads any more today, except to remind you that there are about two dozen recipes in the Salad section of the Radio Cookbook.